

NDOR Local Bridge Selection Policy Public Comments and NDOR's Responses

Comment #	Public Comment	NDOR Response
1	Concur with \$500k minimum threshold	Thank you for your comment.
2	Leftover amount will result in too small amounts of money distributed to local agencies – won't make a difference in their bridge replacements	<p>NDOR understands this concern. Some LPAs with a relatively small deck area of deficient bridges would potentially receive distribution amounts which would take several years to accumulate in order to pay for the average size bridge replacement. On the other hand, LPAs with larger deck area of deficient bridges would potentially receive distribution amounts which would pay for a bridge replacement in two years.</p> <p>Federal funds, although important, provide only a small portion of Nebraska's bridge needs. With over \$1 Billion estimated local bridge replacement and rehabilitation needs in Nebraska, local funds are necessary for the vast majority of bridge maintenance, repair and replacements. Note also that Federal Fund Purchase Program (FFPP) distributions, including those resulting from the purchase of Federal STP funds, may be used for repair and maintenance of bridges.</p>
3	City of Bellevue, third largest city, will get only \$16,000 from the pool	The policy is based on square feet of deficient deck area (need) and not based on population.
4	Hold off on the buyout of bridge funds, and develop a program that focuses only on "large" bridges for funding	NDOR understands this concern, and believes that the local bridge selection policy addresses this issue, although maybe not to the extent that the commenter has in mind. The Federal Funds Purchase Program (FFPP) Agreements have all been executed in any case. Refer also to the response (boldface font) to Comment #2.
5	Smaller cities and villages don't have the money to replace their bridges. County cannot afford to replace bridges from other entities	NDOR acknowledges this concern. NDOR has historically distributed Federal HBP and STP funds only to counties and urban areas (cities of the first class and above), and relied upon counties to cooperate with their municipalities. Cities with population less than 5,000 have historically sought Federal funds through their respective counties. However, the "M" bridges which the comment refers to will stand on their own merit with respect to financial significance. Their Highway Allocation Fund (HAF) distribution will typically be much smaller than county and urban distributions, thus providing a greater chance of "M" bridges being short-listed for consideration.

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6	Smaller cities and villages have bridges that don't meet the \$500,000 threshold	NDOR acknowledges this. The same can be said of county bridges. The purpose of the minimum proposed bridge cost is to minimize administrative expenses for Federal-aid projects. Refer also to the response (boldface font) to Comment #2.
7	\$500,000 threshold is calculated based upon existing length, but final length will be greater and maybe meet the threshold. Use an estimated length in the calculation.	NDOR recognizes this concern and is aware that replacement bridges in Nebraska will typically be longer due to degradable waterways. NDOR therefore has included in this policy the opportunity for an LPA to do an engineering study. If NDOR approves the study, the study's recommended length (and width) will be used instead of the length that is in the NBI.
8	The number of points for user-based costs is too high. Many county bridges, in the agricultural parts of Nebraska, have low ADT and often have short detours, so they won't make the list even though the bridge may meet all other criteria. Adjust the user-based point weighting.	NDOR acknowledges that there are many such bridges in Nebraska. However, NDOR believes that user impact is the most important factor in deciding where to apply scarce Federal funding. Refer also to the response (boldface font) to Comment #2 and to Comment #9.
9	All or most of the money will go to urban bridges. Counties will get shut out.	The selection criteria are not set up to pit county versus city; they are based on statewide needs. The traditional average split (over several years) in Federal HBP funding between urban areas (cities of the first class, Lincoln and Omaha) and counties has been approximately 25% urban and 75% county (\$4 million for urban areas and \$11 million counties). Assuming that \$2 million is set aside annually for local on-system bridges, even in the unlikely event that urban LPAs are awarded the major bridge funds every year, the overall effect would not be too much different than the traditional split. Note also that all of the off-system HBP funds are typically applied to rural bridges.
10	Reserving \$2 million for on –system major bridges is too much	The commenter refers to preliminary discussions in which \$2 million for on-system bridges has been mentioned. That amount is thought to be the minimum amount NDOR believes is necessary to have a beneficial effect on the Federal-aid system. NDOR will re-evaluate the amount to dedicate to financially significant on-system bridges prior to each

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		selection cycle.
11	Don't buy out the on-system bridge funds because (1) BR funds are currently distributed based on need, prioritized based on inspections (2) we can plan BR projects well into the future because bridge inspections are done every two years (3) bridges are expensive.	Point (1) is arguable. The distribution of BR funds historically has been somewhat on a first-come first-serve basis. The only qualification is that bridges had to be eligible for Federal funds. NDOR agrees with points (2) and (3). Also, refer to responses to comments #2 and #4.
12	Reserving \$2 million for on –system major bridges is not enough. Reserve \$4 million, and maybe the entire amount (small distributions get lost in the budget) of \$8 million for financially significant bridges.	See response to Comment #10.
13	Reserving \$2 million for on –system major bridges is not enough. Reserve \$4 million, because bridges are expensive and many approach \$4 million.	See response to Comment #10.
14	Two years is not a hardship. [Note: the context of the comment is the amount of funds to reserve]. It is nice to know the funds are dedicated, and can be budgeted. LPAs can bond.	Thank you for your comments.
15	The need for larger funds is not just bridge related – it is all projects.	NDOR understands this concern and recognizes that the distributed funds will not fully meet the local needs. See the response to Comment #2.
16	The local owner should have input into the selection of the structure. If an LPA deems a structure to be of little value to the public, it would be a waste of money to force the choice of that structure. Allow a substitution.	NDOR has decided to not account for such a rare occurrence in the policy but will consider the recommendation of the LPA during the application process.
17	Structurally Deficient: We are unsure of the language on this requirement; the selection policy states the Deck, Superstructure, and Substructure to have a value of 4. The sufficiency rating formula will deem the structure Structurally Deficient if ONE of the appraisal items has a value of 4. Meaning, you could have a	The qualifying criterion in the major bridge program includes the requirement that a bridge be structurally deficient, per NBI. NDOR omitted the functionally obsolete criteria due to limited funds.

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	Substructure at 4, Superstructure at 5 and the Deck at 5 and the structure would be Structurally Deficient. The eligibility of the structure should be the same as Federal aid bridges now. They should be Functionally Obsolete or Structurally Deficient. In some cases, a bridge may have a terrible substructure and terrible superstructure but the timber deck may be a 6 because they just fixed the rotten timbers. We believe that the eligibility of the bridge should remain as it currently is.	
18	In conversations and explanation of this program, it has been alluded that the Preliminary Engineering and Construction Engineering would be done by NDOR. We believe that the County or City should have the choice of choosing the Engineer of their choice through the proper selection process by the County or City RC.	For the On-System (purchased funds) projects, the LPA will receive the State cash funds and will be responsible for the selection of consultants and contractors for both preliminary engineering and construction engineering. For Off-System (Federal funds) projects, if the LPA manages the project, the LPA will select and negotiate professional services according to Federal-aid requirements.
19	Does additional width for a hiker-biker trail or a sidewalk count in the proposed bridge width?	Yes, if the LPA submits adequate justification and it is approved by NDOR.